

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Dr. Michelle Shankar. I am a primary care pediatrician at Fairhaven Community Health Center and adolescent health services researcher at Yale University.

I stand in support of HB 6616: An Act Concerning Expansion Of Husky Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status.

As a pediatrician, I care for children from the day they are born until they are ready to effectively transition to adulthood. Childhood does not end at age 12. We must expand coverage to ensure access to high quality healthcare for all children, which includes adolescents and young adults (AYA).

Adolescence and young adulthood are a critical window for [physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development](#). The unique health needs of this population include:

- [Routine childhood vaccinations](#) against HPV, Influenza, and Meningococcal disease
- Screening and counseling regarding substance use, sexual and reproductive health, and violence and injury prevention
- Navigating physiologic changes of puberty
- Developing various aspects of identity and relationships with others

It is with urgency that we must look to young people as the next generation of leaders in their lives and in our communities. To ensure a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that all children and adolescents have access to high quality health care.

I support HB 6616 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation as a critical step in working towards healthcare access to all immigrants.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michelle Shankar, MD, FAAP (she/her/hers)

General Pediatrician

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